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'Minister' Is Defendant in Sex Case

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A 62-year-old man who claims to have been a CIA agent tied to the Ronald Rewald case is acting as his own attorney in court against a charge that he sexually molested a 13-year-old girl in Diamond Head crater 2½ years ago.

Self-styled minister Mark Lawrence Pohlbel is charged in the Circuit Court trial with first-degree sexual abuse stemming from a Dec. 4, 1982, incident.

Deputy City Prosecutor Reimette Cooper told jurors yesterday that Pohlbel, as a minister, had arranged to "counsel" the girl for her mother, drove the girl to Diamond Head, laid out a

blanket near shrubs and molested her.

Cooper said Pohlbel told the girl, "God said it was all right," but the girl protested, saying, "You're supposed to be my pastor."

The trial was to resume today before Judge Leland Spencer.

Pohlbel has told attorneys that he is a minister in the Universal Life Church. He also claims to have been an attorney, and thus was allowed by Spencer to represent himself with the assistance of Honolulu attorney Richard Pafundi.

Pohlbel, also known as Charles James Wanamaker, was indicted by a federal grand jury in Los Angeles five years ago on charges of impersonating an Air Force general.

He was indicted on the sex-abuse charge in April 1983, was hospitalized because of chest pains and fled the state later that month, authorities have said. He was arrested in Victoria, B.C., on a bad-check charge in November 1983.

Canadian police said he claimed at various times to be a colonel or a major general in the U.S. Army.

In federal lawsuits against various government officials, Pohlbel claims to have been "kidnapped from Canada" in Vancouver on July 27. In the suits, he claims to have had "extreme involvement" in the Rewald investment-fraud case "as an undercover CIA agent." The CIA has denied that Pohlbel was an agent.